

## Click It or Ticket Kickoff

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### AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Good morning, I'm Ann Carlson, Chief Counsel of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Thank you for joining us today for the launch of our annual *Click It or Ticket* national enforcement mobilization campaign.

Seat belts are proven to be one of the best ways to save your life in a crash. Yet, many still don't buckle up. Worse still, not wearing a seat belt is a habit that is passed on to children who, in turn, may model adult behavior and think it is safe to ride unbuckled.

Our *Click It or Ticket* campaign running from May 22 to June 4 focuses on safety education, strong laws, and law enforcement support to save lives.

Our \$10.5 million national paid media campaign features TV, radio, and digital ads in English and Spanish. Our primary focus is male drivers ages 18 to 34 – who, according to our data, are less likely to buckle up consistently.

A seat belt can literally mean the difference between life or death. New data we're releasing today show that half of all passenger vehicle occupants killed in 2021 weren't wearing their seat belts.

Those rates increase when you dive further into the data. For example, 57% of those in the back seat were unrestrained, while 60% of pickup truck drivers were unbelted.

In fact, NHTSA is preparing to publish a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking soon on a new regulation to require vehicle manufacturers to install seat belt reminder systems in passenger vehicles.

This will encourage more seat belt use and help address the number of unbelted fatalities.

As we go into the Memorial Day holiday, we want everyone to remember that seat belts save lives.

Of the 43,750 passenger vehicle occupants who survived fatal crashes in 2021, 85% buckled up – a lifesaving decision.

Seat belts are your best defense in a crash, and they're designed to work in tandem with your air bag. Your air bag is more effective when you are properly restrained by a seat belt in a crash.

In fact, we estimate that using a seat belt reduces your risk of injury in the front seat by 45%, and of moderate-to-critical injury by 50%.

Our goal is to see every single driver and passenger take this message to heart and make the right choice every time.

Now, what's really interesting is that pretty much everyone knows they should be wearing their seat belt. Our research shows that many people feel that wearing a seat belt makes them safer.

Yet too many people still don't. They may think, oh, I'm not going that far, or I'm sitting in the back seat, I'll be fine.

Our data show there is no such thing as a quick trip down the street when it comes to being unbelted.

Choosing not to wear one can have deadly consequences, no matter how close you are to home or where you're seated in the car.

Our law enforcement partners will be out reminding drivers and passengers of the importance of wearing a seat belt.

It's not about raising revenue; it's about saving lives.

After all, we know that more people use seat belts in states with primary seat belt laws – where a driver can be stopped and cited solely for not buckling up – as compared to states with secondary laws.

We also know that there are more unrestrained fatalities at night. Law enforcement officers will be checking to make sure people are buckled up with our special focus, *Click It or Ticket: Day & Night*.

NHTSA's partnerships with law enforcement and the advocacy community are an important part of our work, and equity is always front and center in those conversations.

It's important for the public to be able to trust that law enforcement will treat them fairly, regardless of their background, ethnicity, race, gender, or sexual orientation.

After all, our end goal is 100% seat belt use and zero fatalities. And remember, it only takes two seconds to buckle up.

With that, we'll conclude today's event. Thanks again to all our speakers for their time, and thank you, our virtual audience, for joining us today.